

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Hearing on “H.R. 3, the Northern Route Approval Act”
April 10, 2013**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today, we take an important step in support of the Keystone XL pipeline, its jobs and affordable energy. I want to remind folks that one of our goals is to develop a North American energy independence plan to ensure we are not at the mercy of the Middle East or countries like Venezuela.

Gas prices have more than doubled in many parts of the country since January 2009, with numerous communities enduring \$4 a gallon today and prices are expected to only go up this summer. Our most vulnerable cannot afford these prices on top of an already weak economy that only created 88,000 jobs last month. The president last year declared that he'd do “whatever it takes” to create U.S. jobs. Well, here's a \$7 billion construction project that will put thousands of Americans back to work. After more than four years - what are we waiting for?

As policymakers, our job is to ensure America can take full advantage of our nation's valuable resources by unlocking the power of our innovators and entrepreneurs. The committee has embarked on a path to explore this new era of North American energy abundance and rapid technological innovation. The ability to successfully unlock these resources will lead to increased American prosperity and less energy imports from geopolitically unstable regions of the world.

We should be measuring our energy policy proposals by whether they help contribute to increasing American energy self-sufficiency. Do they help to reduce volatility from foreign sources, keep costs low for consumers, help maintain or contribute to a diverse energy supply portfolio, and are protective of the environment? By those standards, I am happy to say H.R. 3 passes the test overwhelmingly.

We have all heard the employment numbers associated with this project, the tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs that will be created, but today I am pleased to welcome somebody who will help put a face to those numbers, Keith Stelter of Delta Industrial Valves in Niles, Michigan. Delta's made-in-America valves and the jobs that go with them are an important part of the Keystone XL story. But these jobs can't happen unless Keystone XL gets built.

Keystone XL will also include a number of state-of-art features that will make it the safest oil pipeline in existence. The pipeline would incorporate 57 additional safety standards proposed by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and adhere to stronger new pipeline safety standards that were signed into law, the product of legislation I helped develop along with my colleague Rep. John Dingell. Even the Obama administration's State Department concluded in its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that the project poses minimal environmental risks. Not building Keystone elevates risks as tankers and trains have significantly higher spill rates than pipelines.

The project has broad bipartisan support in the House and Senate and enjoys broad public support as well. It is time for Congress to come together and help make Keystone a reality by approving the Northern Route Approval Act. This important bill takes the lessons we learned when the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline was met with unnecessary roadblocks. Just as the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline was a game changer in the 1970s, the Keystone XL project will be a game changer in our pursuit of North American energy independence.

I would like to thank my friend Ed Whitfield and his subcommittee's tireless efforts to break the administration's four-year long impasse and approve Keystone XL. I also would like to thank my friend Lee Terry for his sponsorship of this bipartisan and commonsense bill.

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